

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Ashland Industries, Inc.

Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center

Ashland Industries' "War on Waste"

Client Profile:

Ashland Industries, Inc. manufactures compact, agricultural, industrial and heavy industrial earthmovers and scrapers. The company employs 48 people at its facility in Ashland, Wisconsin.

Situation:

Ashland Industries' new co-owner and Engineering Manager, Carol Lindsey, had a background in Lean manufacturing, which she brought with her to the company. While visiting the Wisconsin Department of Commerce website, Lindsey discovered the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC), a NIST MEP network affiliate. She contacted NWMOC and enrolled in NWMOC's Lean Certification Program as a refresher and to "lend some credibility to all my talk about Lean." After attending NWMOC's Lean Accounting class, Lindsey decided to use NWMOC's services.

Solution:

NWMOC assisted Ashland Industries in applying Lean principles and 5S to numerous areas of production, resulting in time and cost savings throughout the plant. Parts that were previously drilled and bent on-site are now purchased, predrilled, and prebent for a fraction of the former cost. Because many of the scraper components are heavy, swinging jib cranes are used during assembly. During one of their weekly 'war on waste' meetings, an employee mentioned that he often has to wait for a variable speed jib to correctly align the holes when assembling parts. As part of their continuous improvement activities, the company purchased another variable speed overhead hoist. The new hoist reduced wait time and provides increased accuracy. The Lean journey at Ashland Industries continues as they redesign their processes to improve production times and eliminate waste.

Results:

- * Increased sales from \$1.2 million to \$10 million.
- * Increased floor space by 6,000 square feet.
- * Increased production from 4 scrapers per week to 5 scrapers per week.
- * Improved employee morale.

Testimonial:

"I really like NWMOC's affordable services and the fact that they are paying attention to northwest Wisconsin. Their 'we're here to help you' attitude makes for an easy relationship."

Carol Lindsey, Engineering Manager